

Bi-Partisan Policy Group Blasts Obama Iran Nuclear Deal and Middle East Strategy



✖ The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) released a major policy statement signed by a bi-partisan group of former nationally prominent legislators, Bush and Obama Administration national security, diplomatic officials and the former deputy of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency blasting the emerging P5+1 nuclear deal with Iran, perhaps just days away from possibly being concluded on June 30th. The statement also condemned the Administration appeasement of Iran's state-sponsored regional hegemony and the failure to develop a coherent strategy to combat the rise of Daesh, the Islamic State. The WINEP statement encompassed policy recommendations on these important national security issues. Among the signatories are former US Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT), former California US Representative Howard Berman (D-CA), former CIA Director Gen. David Petraeus, former special negotiator Ambassador Dennis Ross, former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, James Cavanaugh, Olli Heinonen, former Deputy Director of the IAEA, Stephen Hadley, former Bush Administration National Security Director, WINEP own experts and its executive director, Robert Satloff.

Among the key points in the WINEP-sponsored statement addressing the problems with the emerging P5+1 nuclear deal with Iran is the following:

1. *Monitoring and Verification*: The inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (the "IAEA") charged with monitoring compliance with the agreement must have timely and effective access to any sites in Iran they

need to visit in order to verify Iran's compliance with the agreement. This must include military (including IRGC) and other sensitive facilities. Iran must not be able to deny or delay timely access to any site anywhere in the country that the inspectors need to visit in order to carry out their responsibilities.

2. *Possible Military Dimensions*: The IAEA inspectors must be able, in a timely and effective manner, to take samples, to interview scientists and government officials, to inspect sites, and to review and copy documents as required for their investigation of Iran's past and any ongoing nuclear weaponization activities ("Possible Military Dimensions" or "PMD"). This work needs to be accomplished before any significant sanctions relief.
3. *Advanced Centrifuges*: The agreement must establish strict limits on advanced centrifuge R&D, testing, and deployment in the first ten years, and preclude the rapid technical upgrade and expansion of Iran's enrichment capacity after the initial ten-year period. The goal is to push back Iran's deployment of advanced centrifuges as long as possible, and ensure that any such deployment occurs at a measured, incremental pace consonant with a peaceful nuclear program.
4. *Sanctions Relief*: Relief must be based on Iran's performance of its obligations. Suspension or lifting of the most significant sanctions must not occur until the IAEA confirms that Iran has taken the key steps required to come into compliance with the agreement. Non-nuclear sanctions (such as for terrorism) must remain in effect and be vigorously enforced.
5. *Consequences of Violations*: The agreement must include a timely and effective mechanism to re-impose sanctions automatically if Iran is found to be in violation of the agreement, including by denying or delaying IAEA access. In addition, the United States must itself articulate the serious consequences Iran will face in that event.

The group also addressed the inchoate Middle East strategy addressing Iran's regional support for state terrorism and the failed strategy to combat the Islamic State:

1. *In Iraq*: Expand training and arming not only of Iraqi Security Forces but also Kurdish Peshmerga in the north and vetted Sunni forces in the West. Allow U.S. Special Forces to leave their bases and help coordinate air strikes and stiffen Iraqi units. Sideline Iranian-backed militia and separate them from Shiite units ("popular mobilization units") that are not under Iranian control.
2. *In Syria*: Expand and accelerate the U.S. train and equip programs. Work with Turkey to create a safe haven in northern Syria where refugees can obtain humanitarian aid and vetted non-extremist opposition fighters can be trained and equipped. Capitalize on Bashar al-Assad's increasing weakness to split off regime elements and seek to join them with U.S. trained opposition elements. Interdict the transshipment of Iranian weapons into Syria in coordination with the Kurds and Turkey, and consider designating as terrorist organizations Iranian-backed Shiite militias responsible for egregious atrocities.
3. *In Yemen*: Expand support for Saudi Arabia and the UAE in pressuring the warring parties to the negotiating table while seeking to split the Houthi elements away from Iran.
4. *Regionally*: Interdict Iranian arms bound for extremist groups and continue to counter its efforts to harass commercial shipping and our naval forces. Reaffirm U.S. policy to oppose Iran's efforts to subvert local governments and project its power at the expense of our friends and allies.

The WINEP statement concludes:

Collectively, these steps also strengthen U.S. capability

against Daesh (the misnamed "Islamic State"). Acting against both Iranian hegemony and Daesh's caliphate will help reassure friends and allies of America's continued commitment. And it will help address Israel's legitimate concerns that a nuclear agreement will validate Iran's nuclear program, further facilitate its destabilizing behavior, and encourage further proliferation at a time when Israel faces the possible erosion of its "qualitative military edge." We urge the U.S. administration to create a discreet, high-level mechanism with the Israeli government to identify and implement responses to each of these concerns.

Taking the actions we propose while the nuclear negotiations continue will reinforce the message that Iran must comply with any agreement and will not be allowed to pursue a nuclear weapon. This will increase, not decrease, the chance that Iran will comply with the agreement and may ultimately adopt a more constructive role in the region. For the U.S. administration's hopes in this respect have little chance so long as Iran's current policy seems to be succeeding in expanding its influence.

The President's ideological mindset regarding a rapprochement with an untrustworthy Islamic Regime in Tehran coupled with Secretary of State Kerry's appeasement of the red-lines diktats issued by Supreme Ruler Ayatollah Khamenei portend a disastrous emerging agreement, should one be concluded in its current form. We fully anticipate the Administration will issue its own statements rejecting these compelling and cogent recommendations contained in the WINEP statement signed off by a broad array of bi-partisan national security experts, diplomatic negotiators, former national legislators and international nuclear weapons inspectors. With the clock winding down on a final Joint Plan of Action, Americans of all political stripes and Members of Congress should heed the WINEP-sponsored recommendations concerning the emerging P5+1

agreement under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) of 2015. The Congress will have a daunting task to respond in less than 30 days under INARA with the President poised to veto any negative vote, not easily overridden.